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PREDICTORS OF TRANSFER ADJUSTMENT: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY 1/1

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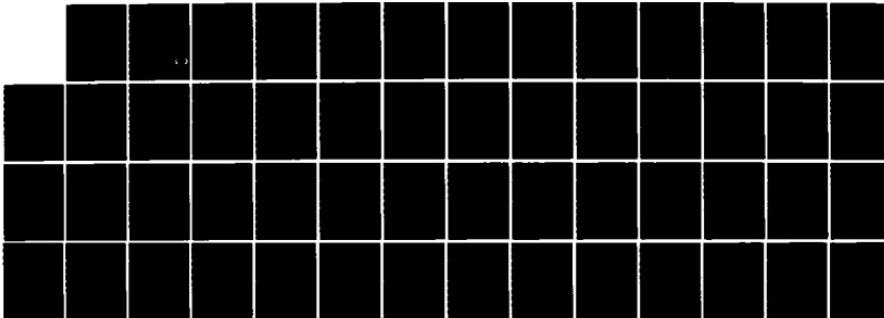
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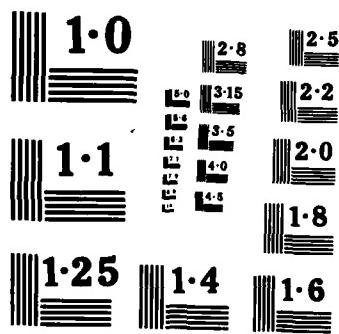
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Organizational Behavior Research

Department of Management

Department of Psychology

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) 143 NCO's who had been notified of an upcoming Permanent Change of Station (PCS) were interviewed prior to moving. Three months after moving, 99 of these individuals returned follow-up questionnaires. Hypotheses were tested concerning premove, move, and post move determinants of post move adjustments to both the job and the location. Adjustment was found to be predicted by pre-move attitude toward the move, adjustment and satisfaction with previous moves, number of dependents, unmet expectations, perceived job advancement, and amount of information about new location received prior to moving.		

Predictors of Transfer Adjustment: A Longitudinal Study

This report presents the results of a longitudinal study of transfer adjustment in a sample of U.S. Air Force non-commissioned officers. Data were collected at two points in time. In April and May of 1983, interviews were conducted with study participants prior to their making a permanent change of station (PCS) transfer. Using a mailed questionnaire, data were then collected from participants at a point approximately three months after they had arrived at their new assignment. Of the 143 NCO's participating in the first data collection, 99 returned the mailed follow-up questionnaire.

The purpose of this study was to identify variables which are predictive of transfer adjustment. Data were collected on eight categories of predictor variables and three categories of dependent "adjustment" variables. The independent variables included: (1) perceived similarity of the past and new assignments, (2) transfer history of the participant, (3) success in adjusting to past transfers, (4) expectations about post-move satisfaction, (5) family situation/attitudes, (6) new assignment "surprise", i.e. the difference between expectations and new assignment reality, (7) amount of social support in the new assignment, and (8) other relevant variables, i.e. perceived career advancement opportunities related to the new assignment, attractiveness of the past assignment, amount of information about the new assignment received prior to transfer, and the amount of notice time given prior to the move. Dependent variables examined were: (1) perceived adjustment difficulty in the new assignment, (2) attitudes about the new assignment and the USAF, and (3) self-rated performance in the new job assignment.

The theoretical basis for choosing each potential predictor will be discussed below.

Similarity. Mansfield (1972) suggests that a major obstacle to adjustment in transfer situations is caused by "task uncertainty." Katz (1980) proposes that a first step in transfer adjustment is for the employee to begin to reduce "environmental uncertainty." Brett (1984) notes that the amount of task and context novelty in transfer situations should relate to the difficulty individuals experience in adjusting to new assignments. Louis (1982) states that the "more elements that are different in the new role or situation, and the more they are different from previous roles, the more the transitioner potentially has to cope with..." (p. 331). Brett and Werbel (1980) found that transfers which involved only moderate changes in the level or function of the employee in the organization resulted in fewer psychological and psychosomatic problems than did transfers with greater changes in level and function. Thus, Hypothesis I of our study was that the greater the degree of similarity between the old and new assignments, the easier it would be for individuals to adjust to the new situation.

Transfer History. Fisher, Wilkins and Eulberg (1982) have suggested that frequency of transfer will affect ability to adjust to the transfer, though the direction of this effect is not clear. One view, predominant in the counseling literature, is that most families can handle one or two moves but that moving too often is destructive. Reestablishing one's identity and social place in a new community takes a great deal of effort, and counsellors report cases in which transferred families are unable to cope with these demands if moves are made very frequently (Seidenberg, 1973). On the other hand, Brett (1982) found virtually no relationships between mobility and a variety of physical, mental, and social measures of "well-being."

An alternate view is that individuals or families who have moved often are better able to cope with relocation than those which move infrequently. This could occur for two reasons. First, some people may simply be "good adjustors," perhaps due to flexibility, independence, self-confidence, extroversion, sensation seeking tendencies, or the like. Upon learning that moving is enjoyable, these individuals might be expected to move frequently. Other individuals, who do not adjust well, should tend to select themselves out of high mobility career lines, and thus develop a history of infrequent moves. When they finally relocate, they may again experience adjustment problems. In sum, individual differences may predispose individuals to self-select careers with varying amounts of anticipated relocations. Another explanation for a possible positive correlation between frequency of moves and adjustment relies on learning. Specifically, frequent movers may have learned coping skills from their moving experiences, which then facilitate adjustment to subsequent moves.

In addition to the number of moves in an individual's transfer history, the nature of those moves may also play an important role in determining transfer adjustment. In the private sector, individuals may have some choice about which possible new assignments to accept. Presumably, they will choose to be transferred to locations they see as desirable when this is possible. Military employees have less choice in where they are sent, but are allowed to express preferences. It seems reasonable to suggest that individuals who have received predominantly preferred locations might have a more positive outlook on future moves, and might adjust better than those who have been sent to proportionally more of their non-preferred locations.

Stemming from the above arguments, the hypotheses regarding transfer history are as follows:

IIA Number of past moves will be positively related to ease of adjustment to the present move.

IIB Proportion of moves to preferred locations will be positively related to ease of adjustment.

Past adjustment success. Brett, and Werbel (1980) found that the wives of individuals making a transfer were more willing to move again if the most recent transfer had been successful. If one accepts the axiom that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, then one would expect that past transfer adjustment success will be positively related to subsequent transfer adjustment (Hypothesis III). The reasons for this hypothesis are identical to those outlined for transfer history, that is, past adjustment success might indicate that the individuals are simply "easy movers" and/or they have learned transfer coping skills which enabled them to adjust to their past assignment, and these skills should carry over to subsequent moves.

Expectations. Shaw, Fisher, and Woodman (1983a), in a study of transfer adjustment in U.S. Marines, found that pre-move expectations about the enjoyment of the new location were predictive of post-transfer adjustment, regardless of the match between these expectations and later reality. Hypothesis IV states that there will be a significant relationship between expectations of satisfaction prior to the move and post-transfer attitudes and adjustment.

Family situation/attitude. Pospicil (1974) points out that transfers can be either positive or negative experiences for the family of the transferred employee. Seidenberg (1973) suggests that financial problems,

increased loneliness, and difficulties with children can often be by-products of transfers. In preliminary interviews with USAF personnel, unreimbursed cost of the move to the family and number of children were often mentioned as factors affecting transfer adjustment. Hypothesis V states that family-related factors such as these will play a significant role in determining post-transfer adjustment.

Surprise. Louis (1980) has defined "surprise" as the difference between anticipations and the actual experiences of the individual in the new assignment. She argues that the extent to which anticipations about the new assignment (concerning such factors as job duties, living conditions, etc.) exceed actual experiences will affect transfer adjustment. Support for this idea has been found in work related to realistic job previews and job turnover (Dunnette, Arvey & Banas, 1973; and Wanous, 1977). Surprise, as defined by Louis, is similar to the concept of reality shock used in other socialization literature. Hypothesis VI states that, in terms of potentially positive aspects of the new assignment, as anticipations exceed actual experiences, adjustment will become more difficult.

Social support. Social support has long been associated with anxiety reduction (House, 1981). Brett & Werbel (1980) found that individuals who received skill-based social support from the old and/or new boss were more adjusted after three months than those who did not receive this type of job-relevant social support. Fisher (1983) found that emotional and role-clarifying support from peers and superiors facilitated the adjustment of newly graduated nurses to their first jobs. Transfer situations are by nature anxiety-producing. Thus, the availability of social support, both on and off the job, may well aid in the reduction of this anxiety as well.

as providing information to aid in subsequent adjustment. Hypothesis VII states that the greater the availability of social support in the new assignment, the easier adjustment to the assignment will be.

Other factors. Brett and Werbel (1980) found that transfers were more readily accepted if they were seen as enhancing the individual's career. Similarly, both Burke (1972) and Pinder (1977) found that lateral transfers were much less satisfying than transfers involving a promotion. One might argue that, to the extent the new assignment is seen as a career advancement, commitment to the assignment would increase, leading to an increased commitment to work through problems encountered in the new assignment. Hypothesis VIIa states that the greater the perceived advancement associated with the new assignment, the easier the adjustment to the assignment and the more positive the attitude about the assignment will be.

Burke (1972, 1974) found that a family's satisfaction with their new assignment was influenced by their feelings toward the old assignment. Thus transfer adjustment is determined not only by the coping required to "go to" a new location but also that which is necessitated by "leaving from" the old. Hypothesis VIIb states that the more favorable the attitude toward the old assignment, the more difficult will be the adjustment in the new assignment.

Burke (1974) and Pinder (1979) found that the time allowed individuals to make and prepare for a move influenced their attitudes toward the new assignment and organization. Fisher et al. (1982) also suggest that the time allowed to decide whether or not to make a move will affect the individual's ability to make an informed decision and thus may influence commitment to carrying out the move successfully once the decision is made.

The amount of notice time given allows individuals to collect information about the new assignment and may contribute to their ability to establish successful strategies for coping with the new assignment once the move is made. Hypothesis VIIId states that amount of notice time will be related to ease of transfer adjustment. Hypothesis VIIId states that the amount of information about the new assignment obtained prior to the transfer will relate to subsequent ability to adjust to the move.

Method

A total of 143 U.S. Air Force Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) participated in this study. Data were collected in two phases. The first phase involved administering an interview and questionnaire to each of the 143 NCO's prior to departure to their new military assignment. In phase two of the study, a modified version of the survey was mailed to each of the NCO's approximately three months after arrival at the new assignment. Follow-up letters were sent to non-respondents, and a total of 99 of the 143 original participants eventually returned the second survey. Twenty seven of the original responders separated, had their PCS cancelled, or could not be located successfully via the forwarding addresses they gave during the interview. Thus, only seventeen (12%) of the original respondents were reached but failed to reply. Analyses were made of data collected in phase I of the study and are reported in Shaw, Fisher, and Woodman (1983b and 1983c). Analyses discussed in the present report relate only to those individuals for whom both phase I and phase II data are available.

Sample

Ninety-nine non-commissioned officers (staff, technical, master, and chief master sergeants) participated in both phases of the study. The

individuals represented over 50 different job classifications (AFSC's) and were originally stationed at one of seven U.S. Air Force bases in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas (Brooks AFB, Randolph AFB, Lackland AFB, and Bergstrom AFB in Texas; Barksdale AFB and England AFB in Louisiana; and Little Rock AFB in Arkansas). Each of these individuals had received notice that they were to make a permanent change of station (PCS). These assignments were both overseas and continental U.S. (CONUS) in nature. Individuals selected for the sample had been scheduled to leave for their new assignment sometime between June 1 and December 31, 1983. The sample was selected from a listing provided to the researchers by the USAF which included the names of approximately 3000 USAF personnel who were scheduled to make a PCS sometime during 1983 or early 1984. All individuals in the study were male. No attempt was made to select individuals proportional to any job classification system. Using USAF data, subjects were selected based upon their past transfer history so that a broad range of transfer frequencies would be included in the sample. It should be noted that number of transfers is usually correlated with number of years of military service. Our sample selection process attempted to minimize this relationship as much as possible by including some longer service personnel with few moves.

Phase I Survey Instrument

The phase I survey instrument was developed based upon information collected from (1) preliminary talks with USAF personnel, (2) research done earlier on transfer processes in the U.S. Marine Corps (see Shaw, *et al.*, 1983a) and (3) a thorough review of relevant literature on transfers in organizations. The final instrument consisted of three sections with a total of 105 items. The first section of the survey was completed by the

individual and consisted primarily of demographic items. The second section of the survey consisted of both fixed-response and open-ended interview items. The researchers went through each item of the second part of the survey orally with the respondent and recorded responses to the question. The third section of the survey consisted of fixed-response items which were completed by the individual. Not all of the data collected in phase I is presented in this report. Specifically, data on the open-ended items were analyzed separately and are discussed in a separate report (Shaw, Fisher & Woodman, 1983c).

Phase II Survey Instrument

A number of items were dropped from the Phase I survey instrument (e.g., those which dealt with the anticipation of the upcoming move) and a few items were added to form the Phase II survey. This instrument consisted of 63 items (5 demographic items, 8 open-ended items, and 50 fixed-response questions). Data concerning the open-ended items are not presented in this report. This survey was mailed with a return addressed, stamped envelope to each of the 143 original participants. Items which assess the specific dependent and independent variables of interest in this study are discussed below and are presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Sample Sizes for All Dependent and Independent Variables.

<u>Dependent Variables</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>
1. Job adjustment	.06	2.64	89
2. Co-worker adjustment	.10	1.69	93
3. Total personal adjustment	.08	3.73	83
4. Total family adjustment	-10.97	6.75	96
5. Role ambiguity	50.39	11.99	92
6. Job attractiveness (present)	-.003	1.81	98
7. Present Assignment Satisfaction	23.30	6.49	97
8. USAF attitude	17.68	2.81	85
9. Future move attitude	5.29	2.34	90
10. Self-rated performance	74.30	19.25	97
<u>Independent Variables</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>
I. Similarity			
1. Job	.07	1.70	98
2. Overall	9.23	3.40	96
II. Transfer History			
3. Total # PCS's	5.57	2.43	99
4. Time since last PCS	45.17	23.35	96
5. Preferred/Total PCS	.69	.25	85
III. Past Adjustment Success			
6. Job	-.01	2.30	97
7. Co-worker	-.03	1.92	97
8. Total personal	-.07	3.40	93
9. Family	-11.98	5.25	96
IV. Expectations			
10. Prior reluctance	33.18	8.24	95
11. Expected job satisfaction	5.86	1.28	97
12. Expected overall satisfaction	27.35	4.41	92
V. Family			
13. Attitude	4.09	1.70	97
14. Cost of move	1698.90	2104.12	91
15. Number of dependents	2.63	1.38	99
VI. Surprise			
16. Job similarity	-.05	1.51	74
17. Overall similarity	-.6.09	2.82	62
18. Match to ideal	-.6.44	4.73	54
19. Advancement	-.51	2.28	96
VII. Social Support			
20. Sponsor help	2.33	1.22	96
21. Friends	1.94	1.18	98
VIII. Other			
22. Advancement	4.72	1.81	98
23. Past job attractiveness	-.06	1.76	98
24. Past overall assignment attractiveness	-.01	1.74	98
25. Prior information	5.90	1.88	96
26. Notice time	3.80	1.88	96

present assignment satisfaction (DV7) but which had been asked during phase I concerning their pre-PCS assignment. During phase I individuals had also rated the extent to which their pre-PCS assignment had matched their ideal assignment in terms of climate, city size, geographical location, culture, and job. These 10 items were standardized, then summed to yield an overall past assignment attractiveness score, with a high score indicating a high level of attractiveness.

Prior to assignment information. In phase I NCO's were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt they "knew what to expect" about the new job and community in their next assignment. These two items were rated using a 5 point (1 = no idea of what to expect, 5 = know exactly what to expect) scale. These items were summed to form a prior information index.

Notice time. During phase I individuals indicated the date on which they received notice of their PCS. An index of notice time was computed as the number of months from that date to the date of departure on the PCS.

The major independent and dependent variables in the study are summarized in Table 2. Also given in Table 2 are the means, standard deviations, and sample sizes associated of these variables.

Intercorrelations among the dependent variables are found in Table 3 and intercorrelations among the independent variables are in Table 4.

advancement in their USAF career. This was subtracted from the actual advancement rating collected in phase II to yield an advancement surprise index.

Social support. During phase II two items were used to measure the availability of social support in the new assignment. One item asked "How helpful was your sponsor in easing your move to the new location?" This item was rated using a 4 point (1 = very helpful, 4 = not helpful at all) scale. During the course of their careers, most military employees meet a great number of people, and it is not uncommon to run across old acquaintances who are now stationed at one's new location. Thus, a second item asked the individual to indicate how many friends were at the new assignment location when he arrived using a 5 point (1 = no one, 5 = very many old friends) scale.

Perceived advancement. During phase II, NCO's were asked to indicate on a 7 point (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) scale, the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "In making the move to my present assignment, I made a significant step toward advancing my career in the USAF."

Attractiveness of the past assignment. Both past job attractiveness and overall past assignment attractiveness indexes were obtained. In phase I of the study, individuals were asked to what extent they were satisfied with their present job assignment. Additionally, they were asked to rate the extent to which their present assignment matched their "ideal" job assignment. These two items were standardized, then summed to yield a job attractiveness score, with a high score indicating high attractiveness. The correlation between the two items was .55. An overall past assignment attractiveness was derived using items identical to those used in computing

community. The same 7 point scale was used as above. For expected job and overall satisfaction, a high score indicates high indicated satisfaction. For the reluctance scale, a high score indicates an eagerness to make the move.

Family attitude/situation. In phase II, NCO's were asked to rate on a 5 point scale (1 = dreaded the move, 5 = looked forward to the move) the attitude of their wife and children toward the PCS prior to moving. Also in phase II, respondents gave in dollar amounts their personal cost of the move, i.e., that not reimbursed to them by the USAF. Additionally, during phase I data were collected from participants concerning the number of their dependents.

Surprise. Four measures of surprise were obtained. In phase I items almost identical to those used to measure present job similarity (IV1) were used to measure expected job similarity. A job similarity surprise index was obtained by subtracting expected similarity from actual similarity. Thus a negative score indicates that expected similarity was greater than actual similarity as measured in phase II. Overall similarity surprise was measured by subtracting data collected in phase I (identical to that in phase II) from the actual overall similarity measure (IV2). In phase I, NCO's were asked to rate using a 5 point (1 = bad match, 5 = good match) the extent to which they expected the climate, city size, culture, geographical location, and job in their new assignment to match their "ideal." Those ratings were summed to yield an expected match to ideal index. This was subtracted from data collected in phase II concerning the actual match to ideal of these five aspects of the new assignment. This yielded a match to ideal surprise index. Finally, in phase I, NCO's were asked to rate the extent to which they expected their PCS to be an

data concerning the date of their last PCS move was obtained. An index, time since last PCS, was computed which equaled the number of months from their last PCS to the date of their departure on the present PCS move. In a question used in phase I to determine the number of PCS's made by each respondent, individuals were also asked whether they had wanted to make each particular PCS. A score was then computed which equaled the number of "preferred" moves divided by the total number of PCS's.

Past transfer adjustment. Items identical to those used to measure post-PCs adjustment had also been used to measure adjustment to the previous assignment (phase I). Four adjustment indexes indentical in structure to DV1-DV4 were computed. Coefficient alphas for past job adjustment and past total personal adjustment were .69 and .64 respectively. Past co-worker adjustment and past family adjustment were also measured.

Expectations prior to move. Three measures of expectations about the upcoming move were collected during phase I of the study. The first, reluctance to move, was measured with one item in which individuals rated their reluctance or eagerness to move on a 7 point scale (1 = very reluctant, 7 = very eager). An additional five semantic differential items (very bad - very good, very negative - very positive, pessimistic - optimistic, apprehensive - relaxed, unhappy - happy) were rated using a 7 point scale format. Those six items were combined to yield an overall reluctance index. Coefficient alpha was .93. Expected job satisfaction was measured with one item using a 7 point (1 = expect to be very dissatisfied, 7 = expect to be very satisfied) scale. Expected overall satisfaction was computed using responses to five items which concerned expected satisfaction with the new job, base, co-workers, housing, and

Independent Variables

Eight major independent variables were measured in this study. Some of these data were collected during phase I while others were collected during phase II. In the case of some of the independent variables, more than one index of that variable was computed. Those measures are described below.

Similarity. Two indexes of move similarity were obtained. The first, job similarity (Table 1, IV1), consisted of two items, one relating to the similarity of the new job to the previous job and a second relating to the amount of job responsibility in the new assignment compared to the previous. The job responsibility item was recoded so that responses 7,1 = 1, 6,2 = 2, 5,3 = 3, and 4 = 4. Thus a high score on this item indicated a high level of similarity in the amount of responsibility. A total job similarity score was computed by first standardizing both items, then summing. In addition, individuals were asked to rate the similarity of the climate, city size and culture of the new assignment to the previous on a 5 point (1 = not similar at all, 5 = the same) scale (Table 1, IV2). An overall similarity index was obtained by first converting job similarity to a 5 point scale, then summing all 5 items. Since the items represented different aspects of the situation it was not necessary for the ratings to be highly correlated with one another. Thus no coefficient alpha was computed. A high score indicates a high degree of similarity.

Transfer history. Three measures of transfer history were obtained during phase I of the study. Individuals were asked to list the number of PCS moves they had made during their USAF career. The first index, number of PCS's was simply the number of the assignments. In addition,

USAF attitude. Three items (Table 1, DV8) were used to measure overall attitude toward the U.S. Air Force. These three items concerned the individual's intent to make the USAF a career, their intent to reenlist, and their overall satisfaction with the USAF. Scoring on the items dealing with career and reenlistment intent was reversed. Response category 8 on the reenlistment item (i.e., "don't need to reenlist...") was treated as missing data. A total USAF attitude score was then derived by summing the three item responses, with a high score indicating a positive attitude toward the USAF. Coefficient alpha was .61.

Future moves attitude. A single item, "How willing are you to move again 3-4 years in the future" was used to measure attitude toward future PCS moves. An eight point rating scale was used with 1 = will not move again and 8 = very eager to move again. A ninth response category, "not applicable, will be retiring," was treated as missing data.

Performance

Self-rated performance. Respondents were asked to "Please assess your overall job performance on the scale provided. Check how well you are actually doing (not your potential or what you could do if you tried harder) compared to other people you know of similar rank who are assigned to the same job." The rating scale consisted of a percentile scale in 5 percentile increments ranging from the 5th percentile to the 100th percentile. Verbal anchors were supplied for the 25th, 50th, 75th, 90th, 95th, and 100th percentile, e.g., "of all the people I know working on the same job in the Air Force, I am currently performing better than 75% of them."

A high score indicated difficulty in adjusting. Coefficient alpha for this scale was .71.

Total family adjustment. Each respondent was asked to rate on a 7 point scale the difficulty he, his wife and children (where applicable) had in adjusting to the new assignment. Each individual was also asked to indicate the number of weeks needed by each family member to adjust. A total family adjustment score was derived by (1) reversing the scoring on the 7 point scale items, (2) standardizing all items, and (3) summing. A high score indicated a high level of difficulty in adjusting to the new assignment. No coefficient alpha was computed for this scale since (1) the number of items used to compute the score varied across individuals (depending on the size of the family) and (2) the difficulty of adjustment for different family members was not assumed to be correlated.

Role ambiguity. Ten items comprising the Beehr (1976) and Rizzo et al. (1970) scales (Table 1, DV5) were used to measure the experienced role ambiguity of the respondent. A total ambiguity score was derived by summing the ten items. A high score indicates low ambiguity. Coefficient alpha for this scale was .92.

Attitudes

Job attractiveness. Two items (Table 1, DV6) were used to measure the attractiveness of the present job assignment. These two items ($r = .60$) were summed to yield an overall job attractiveness index with a high score indicating high attractiveness.

Present assignment satisfaction. One item (7 point scale) measuring five aspects of present assignment satisfaction (job, co-workers, base, housing, community) was used in the present study (Table 1, DV7). A total satisfaction score was derived by summing responses to all five aspects with a high score indicating high satisfaction.

Adjustment

Job adjustment. Three items (Table 1, DV1) related to the individual's perception of the difficulty he had in adjusting to the technical aspects of the new job assignment. Two of the items asked the respondent to indicate the number of weeks it had taken him to adjust, while a third item asked for a rating of adjustment difficulty on a 5 point scale. A total job adjustment score was derived by: (1) reversing the scoring on the 5 point scale item, (2) standardizing all the items, and (3) summing. A high score indicated difficulty in adjusting to the job. Coefficient alpha for this scale was .85.

Co-worker adjustment. Two items (Table 1, DV2) were used to measure the difficulty of adjusting to the interpersonal aspects of the work setting. The first item asked for a rating on a 5 point scale while the second item required the individual to indicate the number of weeks it had taken to adjust. A total co-worker adjustment score was derived by: (1) reversing the scoring on the 5 point scale item, (2) standardizing both items and (3) summing. As for job adjustment, a high score indicated difficulty in adjusting.

Total personal adjustment. Six items were used to derive a total personal adjustment difficulty index for each of the respondents. Respondents were asked to rate on a 7 point scale the ease or difficulty they had in adjusting to their new community. They were also asked to indicate the number of weeks it had taken to adjust to the new community. Those two items were combined with the two items used to measure co-worker adjustment, and the first two items used to measure job adjustment, to form a total personal adjustment score. As before, scoring on the 5 point and 7 point scales were reversed, all items were standardized, and then summed.

II. Independent Variables

IV1: Job Similarity

Considering the nature of your present job assignment, and the job you had in your previous assignment, how does your present job compare to your last job?

- 1. not similar at all
- 2. slightly similar
- 3. similar
- 4. very similar
- 5. the same

Considering the amount of responsibility you have in your present job assignment and that in your previous job, would you say that the change to your present job represented:

- 1. a major decrease in responsibility
- 2. a moderate decrease in responsibility
- 3. a slight decrease in responsibility
- 4. no change in responsibility
- 5. a slight increase in responsibility
- 6. a moderate increase in responsibility
- 7. a major increase in responsibility

IV2: Overall Similarity

When you move to a new location, the new location can be very similar or very different from the previous location in terms of the climate, size of the city, and "cultural" aspects of the area. Think about your location previous to being here. Using the scale below, how similar/dissimilar is this place compared to your previous location in terms of climate, city size, and culture?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. not similar at all | Climate _____ |
| 2. slightly similar | City size _____ |
| 3. similar | Culture _____ |
| 4. very similar | |
| 5. the same | |

Dependent Variables

Ten dependent variables were measured in the present study. Five of those variables related to individual and family adjustment to the new location and job, four variables related to attitudes toward the new job, location, and the U.S. Air Force in general, and one variable concerned performance in the new assignment.

DV8: USAF Attitude

What is your intention toward making the Air Force a career (20 years+)? Check one.

- 1. Definitely will make the Air Force a career
- 2. Probably will make the Air Force a career
- 3. Lean toward making the Air Force a career
- 4. Undecided
- 5. Lean toward not making the Air Force a career
- 6. Probably will not make the Air Force a career
- 7. Definitely will not make the Air Force a career

What are your intentions toward reenlisting in the Air Force when your present enlistment expires? Check one.

- 1. Definitely will reenlist
- 2. Probably will reenlist
- 3. Lean toward reenlisting
- 4. Undecided
- 5. Lean toward not reenlisting
- 6. Probably will not reenlist
- 7. Definitely will not reenlist
- 8. Don't need to reenlist, will be able to retire

Taking all things into consideration, how satisfied/dissatisfied are you with your quality of life in the Air Force? Check one.

- 1. very dissatisfied
- 2. dissatisfied
- 3. slightly dissatisfied
- 4. neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
- 5. slightly satisfied
- 6. satisfied
- 7. very satisfied

DV9: Future Moves Attitude

How willing are you to move again 3-4 years in the future?

- 1. will not move again
- 2. very reluctant to move again
- 3. somewhat reluctant to move again
- 4. slightly reluctant to move again
- 5. neither reluctant nor eager to move again
- 6. slightly eager to move again
- 7. somewhat eager to move again
- 8. very eager to move again
- 9. not applicable, will be retiring

I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my job..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I know that I have divided my time properly..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I know what my responsibilities are..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I know exactly what is expected of me..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel certain about how much authority I have on the job..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Explanation is clear of what has to be done..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

DV6: Job Attractiveness

We all have in our minds some idea of what would we like as an "ideal" military job assignment (i.e., tha actual job we do). When you were told that you would be assigned to your present job assignment, would you say that this job was:

- 1. a very poor match with my ideal
- 2. a poor match with my ideal
- 3. neither a poor nor good match with my ideal
- 4. a good match with my ideal
- 5. a very good match with my ideal

Using the scale below, how satisfied/dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your present assigment? Use the 1 to 7 scale to rate your satisfaction with the job, then your co-workers, and so on.*

- 1. extremely dissatisfied
- 2. dissatisfied
- 3. slightly dissatisfied
- 4. neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
- 5. slightly satisfied
- 6. satisfied
- 7. extremely satisfied

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with

- A. The job itself _____
- B. Co-workers _____
- C. Base _____
- D. Housing _____
- E. Community _____

*only response A, "the job itself," was used in measuring job attractiveness

DV7: Present Assignment Satisfaction

See item above. Responses A-E were used to compute present assignment satisfaction.

DV3: Total Personal Adjustment

The concept of "adjustment to the new location" during a transfer is difficult to define. One way of looking at this concept would be to say that when people move to a new place, "the move" dominates their lives for some time before and after their arrival at the new base/community. You must leave a home, a community, and friends, and establish a new home, reasonably satisfying activities within the new base/community, and new friendships outside of your work environment. A move to a new assignment often results in problems which are unusual in that they are problems which are directly caused by the move and which you would otherwise not experience. Adjustment to the base/community means that the move no longer dominates your life. You have established comfortable ties in the new location and the special problems caused by the move have been eliminated or reduced to "normal" levels. Using the scale below please indicate how easy or difficult it was for each of the following people to adjust to the base/community after your present PCS.

0. not applicable
1. very difficult
2. difficult
3. slightly difficult
4. neither difficult nor easy
5. slightly easy
6. easy
7. very easy

- A. Yourself _____
 B. Your spouse _____
 C. Oldest child _____
 Next oldest child _____

 Youngest child _____

DV4: Total Family Adjustment

See items used to measure DV3

DV5: Role Ambiguity

I can predict what others will expect of me tomorrow..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am clear on what others will expect of me on my job..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On my job, whatever situation arises, there are procedures for handling it..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I get enough facts and information to work my best. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Table 1: Phase II Questionnaire Items

I. Dependent Variables**DV1: Job Adjustment**

How easy or difficult was it for you to learn the technical aspects of your job in this assignment (i.e., the actual technical characteristics of your job, the types of tools and machinery you use, the procedures you used to complete your task)?

- 1. very difficult
- 2. difficult
- 3. neither difficult nor easy
- 4. easy
- 5. very easy

How many weeks did it take you to learn the technical aspects of your job in this assignment? If you have not yet learned all the technical aspects of this assignment, please estimate the total time from the date of the move until you will probably have learned the technical aspects _____.

Overall, it takes a while to "get up to speed" in a new job. About how long do you think that it took or will take for you to feel normally productive in your new job? That is, to reach the performance level that is typical of you? _____

DV2: Co-worker Adjustment

How easy or difficult was it for you to adjust to the interpersonal aspects of your job in this assignment (i.e., your co-workers, superior officers, other people with whom you interact on the job)? Please check one.

- 1. very difficult
- 2. difficult
- 3. neither difficult nor easy
- 4. easy
- 5. very easy

How many weeks did it take you to adjust to the interpersonal aspects associated with your new co-workers, superior officers, etc. on this assignment? If you don't yet feel adjusted, please estimate the total time which it will take to feel adjusted to the interpersonal aspects of this assignment. _____

Table 3: Intercorrelations Among Dependent Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Job Adjustment	-	.41	.78	.23	-.31	-.31	-.16	-.24	.06	-.36
2. Co-workers Adjustment	-	-	.76	.20	-.36	-.26	-.42	-.25	-.02	-.30
3. Total Personal Adjustment	-	-	-	.46	-.52	-.39	-.50	-.33	.03	-.40
4. Total Family Adjustment	-	-	-	-	-.18	-.16	-.34	-.14	-.11	.01
5. Role Ambiguity	-	-	-	-	-	.37	.44	.24	.10	.41
6. Job Attractiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	.56	.20	-.24	.16
7. Present Assignment Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.39	-.14	.14
8. USAF Attitude	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.05	.17
9. Future Moves Attitude	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.07
10. Self-Rated Performance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* all correlations above .20 are significant at $p \leq .05$

Results

Pearson product moment correlations were computed to examine the relationship between each of the 26 independent variables and 10 dependent variables. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

As predicted, similarity was significantly related to several dependent variables. Although job similarity did not correlate significantly ($p \leq .05$) with any of the adjustment indexes, greater similarity was associated with less role ambiguity and higher self-rated performance. In addition, greater overall similarity of the new and old location was related to higher present job attractiveness and to easier family and personal adjustment.

Contrary to predictions, transfer history (number of moves and time since last move) did not show significant relationships with the adjustment indexes. Number did correlate with self-rated performance and attitude toward future moves. More frequent movers rate themselves as better performers after three months in the new job, but are less willing to move again.

Results for the relationship between past adjustment ease/difficulty and present assignment adjustment were consistent with our hypotheses. Individuals who had adjusted easily in their past assignment showed a similar ease of adjustment in their new assignment. They also showed greater levels of self-rated performance in the new assignment.

Prior reluctance to make the move was correlated, as predicted, with job and personal adjustment, role ambiguity, job attractiveness and assignment satisfaction. Those individuals who were eager to move shared lower levels of role ambiguity, higher job attractiveness, higher levels of overall assignment satisfaction and easier job and personal adjustment.

Pre-move job and overall satisfaction correlated with their respective present assignment counterparts, but did not show any significant relationships with any of the adjustment dependent measures.

As predicted, number of dependents and cost of the move correlated significantly with difficulty of family adjustment. Pre-move family attitude toward the impending move, however, did not relate to later family adjustment indices.

Of the four "surprise" indexes, only "match-to-ideal" surprise showed any major relationship to adjustment or attitudes toward the new assignment. Match-to-ideal was significantly related to both total personal and family adjustment. Individuals whose new assignment was considerably less ideal than expected (negative score) showed high levels of difficulty in personal and family adjustment and low levels of expressed job attractiveness and overall assignment satisfaction.

In a surprising finding, the amount of help received from a USAF sponsor was strongly and negatively correlated to job and assignment satisfaction. Number of old friends in the new location correlated as predicted with greater assignment satisfaction.

Perceived advancement correlated in the predicted direction with both co-worker and total personal adjustment. The correlations indicated that the more individuals perceived a move as being a career advance, the easier their adjustment to the new assignment. Perceived advancement was strongly related to overall assignment satisfaction and somewhat less strongly related to job attractiveness and overall attitude toward the USAF.

Although past job attractiveness and overall past assignment attractiveness correlated significantly with several of the dependent variables, the correlations were opposite to predictions. For both

variables, the obtained correlations indicated that high past job or overall assignment satisfaction were related to easy adjustment and a high level of satisfaction with the new assignment.

Amount of information given prior to the move was related in the predicted direction to total personal adjustment, role ambiguity, and assignment satisfaction. It appears that more information facilitates adjustment and satisfaction while reducing ambiguity.

Notice time was correlated significantly, but in the opposite direction from that predicted, with both job adjustment and job attractiveness. The greater the notice time given, the more difficult the subsequent adjustment and the less attractive the present assignment was rated.

Regression analyses. For each dependent variable, those independent variables which correlated significantly ($p \leq .05$) with the dependent variable were used in a stepwise regression analysis procedure. Since "surprise" data were available for a relatively small number of subjects (and thus would have drastically reduced the sample size of the regression analyses in which they were used), those variables were omitted from the regression procedures. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 6. Multiple R's ranged from .30 (self-related performance) to .72 (present assignment satisfaction), with most R's in the mid-.50's range.

Table 4: Intercorrelations Among Independent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
16. Job Similarity Surprise	-	52*	12	-07	-13	-12	10	-05	-13	-16	-03															
17. Overall Similarity Surprise		-	-04	12	-20	-18	07	12	-17	-23	18															
18. Match to Ideal Surprise			-	52*	-27	06	23	-26	-13	-05	18															
19. Advancement Surprise				-	01	01	62*	-35*	01	-18	-03															
20. Sponsor Help					-	01	-20*	-07	-08	-17	-01															
21. Friends						-	11	07	03	48*	-12															
22. Advancement							-	03	15	-01	-04															
23. Past Job Attractiveness								-	49*	02	-21															
24. Past Overall Attractiveness									-	05	01															
25. Prior Information										-	13															
26. Notice Time																										

* p ≤ .05

Table 5: Correlations Among Dependent and Independent Variables

Sample size varies due to missing data for certain variables.

+	p < .10
*	p < .05
**	p < .01
***	p < .001

Table 6: Regression Analyses*

<u>DV1: Job Adjustment</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>Rsq</u>	<u>Beta</u>
Past Job Adjustment	.44	.20	.44
Notice Time	.51	.26	.24
<u>DV2: Co-worker Adjustment</u>			
Past Job Attractiveness	.37	.13	-.32
Past Job Adjustment	.44	.20	.28
Family Attitude	.50	.25	.23
Perceived Advancement	.54	.29	-.21
<u>DV3: Total Personal Adjustment</u>			
Past Job Adjustment	.41	.17	.37
Overall Similarity	.50	.25	-.29
Perceived Advancement	.56	.30	-.25
<u>DV4: Total Family Adjustment</u>			
Number of Dependents	.50	.25	.48
Cost of Move	.55	.30	.24
Overall Past Assignment Attractiveness	.59	.35	-.21
<u>DV5: Role Ambiguity</u>			
Job similarity	.38	.15	.33
Expected Overall Satisfaction	.49	.24	.29
Past Total Personal Adjustment	.55	.31	-.25
<u>DV6: Job Attractiveness (present)</u>			
Sponsor Help	.40	.16	-.30
Expected Job Satisfaction	.51	.26	.32
Perceived Advancement	.56	.30	.23
<u>DV7: Present Assignment Satisfaction</u>			
Perceived Advancement	.51	.26	.40
Prior Reluctance	.65	.42	.24
Sponsor Help	.69	.48	-.26
Expected Overall Satisfaction	.72	.51	.23
<u>DV8: USAF Attitude</u>			
Perceived Advancement	.28	.08	.32
Ratio Preferred/Total PCS	.41	.17	-.31

DV9: Future Move Attitude

Only one variable correlated significantly ($p \leq .05$) with Future Move Attitude, Total PCS ($r = -.23$).

DV10: Self-Rated Performance

Past Total Personal Adjustment	.30	.09	-.30
-----------------------------------	-----	-----	------

*All variables listed added significantly ($p \leq .05$) to the regression equations. All regression equations were significant at $p \leq .001$.

Discussion

For the most part considerable support for the hypotheses was found. Each hypothesis will be discussed in turn.

Hypothesis I: Similarity and Adjustment

Hypothesis I stated that the more similar the new assignment was to the old, the easier adjustment to the new assignment would be. Our measure of overall assignment similarity was significantly related to both personal and family adjustment as well as to perceived role ambiguity and job attractiveness. Job similarity was significantly related to only role ambiguity and self-rated performance. This data supports Louis (1982), who stated that adjustment to new assignments would become more difficult as the number of new "elements" with which the individual must cope increases.

Hypothesis IIa and IIb: Transfer History and Adjustment

Very little support was found for the predicted relationship between transfer history and adjustment. Total number of PCS moves did correlate significantly with attitudes toward future moves and self-rated performance, but did not relate to any adjustment indices. The ratio of preferred to total PCS's correlated as predicted with USAF attitude. It would seem than transfer frequency has little effect on transfer adjustment. At least two explanations for this may be appropriate. First, as Seidenberg (1973) suggests, there may be some critical number of transfers above which individuals simply "run out of steam" and can no longer cope with the stresses of too frequent transfers. Such a process would suggest an inverted-U relationship between number of transfers and adjustment. Our data did not, however, support this alternative explanation. Secondly, it may simply be that the coping skills

which individuals must learn to effectively adjust can be learned adequately after only 2 or 3 transfers. Thus, additional transfers do not add significantly to the individual's repertoire of coping skills. This explanation seems more plausible, particularly when combined with the finding on the relationship between past adjustment and subsequent adjustment. As will be discussed in the next section, this data does indicate the possibility that skills used to cope with one transfer may be carried over to subsequent transfers. It just may be that those skills can be learned relatively quickly and do not increase as more and more transfers are experienced.

Hypothesis III: Past Adjustment and Present Adjustment

Strong support for hypothesis III was found. Past job adjustment, past co-worker adjustment and past total personal adjustment related significantly and in the predicted direction with several indices of adjustment to the present move. Past family adjustment correlated significantly only with present family adjustment, thus indicating some distinction between work and non-work related adjustment processes. These results support two possible explanations of why past adjustment relates to present adjustment. First, coping skills used to adjust successfully in the past may be carried over and used successfully to cope with the new transfer situation. Secondly, certain individuals and their families may simply be "easy movers" who are able to cope with new situations regardless of their precise nature. It may be that both of these processes are operating. Research to determine the relative contribution of those two processes to transfer adjustment is needed.

Hypothesis IV: Expectations and Adjustment

Support for the influence of expectations on transfer adjustment was found primarily in relation to pre-transfer attitudes. The more positive the attitude toward an upcoming move, the more positive the attitude toward the new assignment once moved. This finding may simply reflect the fact that expectations were developed based on accurate information, i.e., positive expectations existed because the new assignment was, in fact, known to be "good duty." As predicted, the relationship found between both prior reluctance and expected overall assignment satisfaction and role ambiguity was such that the more eager individuals were to move, and the greater their level of expected satisfaction, the less role ambiguity they experienced after moving. This again suggests that expectations may have been based upon accurate information about the new assignment.

Hypothesis V: Family and Adjustment

The effects of family attitude/situation on transfer adjustment were in the predicted direction but were very specific in nature. Cost of the move and number of dependents both correlated strongly with family adjustment. Family attitude correlated significantly with employee adjustment to new co-workers. This latter finding may suggest that when family attitude toward the move is positive and thus social relationships within the family are not strained, it becomes easier for individuals to attend to and adjust successfully to social relationships in the work setting.

Hypothesis VI: Surprise and Adjustment

Only one of the four surprise indexes showed a significant relationship to several of the adjustment measures. Surprise due to anticipated vs. actual match of the new assignment to an ideal assignment

correlated significantly with total personal and family adjustment, job attractiveness, assignment satisfaction, and USAF attitude. To the extent that anticipated match-to-ideal was greater than actual match-to-ideal, adjustment to the new assignment became more difficult. This is supportive of Louis (1980), but the failure of the other three surprise indices to significantly relate to adjustment suggests that further investigation of this surprise variable is necessary.

Hypothesis VII: Social Support and Adjustment

No support for the predicted relationship between social support and adjustment was found. In fact, sponsor help was negatively correlated ($p \leq .01$) with job attractiveness and assignment satisfaction. One possible explanation of this might be that the amount of help sponsors offer transferees is related to the favorability of the new assignment. That is, if the assignment is "good duty," the sponsor sees little need to provide information. If, on the other hand, the assignment is "bad duty," sponsor help increases in level. Thus, high levels of sponsor help may reflect appropriately the basic unattractiveness of the assignment which is then mirrored in the satisfaction ratings of the individual.

Hypothesis VIII: Other Factors and Adjustment

Advancement correlated significantly and in the predicted direction with personal and family adjustment and with job attractiveness, assignment satisfaction, and USAF attitude. Transfers which are seen as beneficial to the career of the transferee may well increase commitment to the move and a subsequent attitude to adjust and make it work once the transfer has occurred.

In terms of the effects that past job and assignment attractiveness have on transfer adjustment, our data indicate a process opposite to that expected. There seems to be a positive carry-over effect to the new assignment. Thus, if the past assignment was well liked, adjustment is easier and attitude toward the new assignment is good.

Amount of prior information obtained correlates in the predicted direction with personal adjustment, role ambiguity and assignment satisfaction. Thus the more information obtained prior to departure, the easier is subsequent personal adjustment, the more clear are the new job duties, and the greater the assignment satisfaction.

Finally, in terms of notice time given prior to departure, relationships opposite to those predicted were found. As notice time increased, transfer adjustment was more difficult and the new job was less attractive. One plausible explanation of this would be that, in our sample, notice time was related to the actual difficulty of the transfer. Individuals making transfers to very new and difficult job assignments might well have been notified of that transfer further in advance than were individuals making less "traumatic" moves. Alternatively, having a move "drag out" may be more stressful, as families are in an unsettled state for a longer period of time, and adjustment could be hindered by emotional fatigue.

Summary

In summary, the results of this study are generally supportive of past research. The data points to the need for a greater understanding of how similarity affects transfer adjustment. Of particular relevance are the ways that organizations might need to incorporate similarity issues into their transfer policies to insure minimum productivity loss during transfers. Several of our findings point to the need to differentiate

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between the effects that learned transfer coping strategies have upon adjustment versus the role that personality and/or other personal factors play. It seems that the effects of transfer frequency and "surprise" are more complex than expected and require further analysis. The present longitudinal study has provided us with a generally consistent and logical picture of at least some aspects of the transfer process. Additional research is necessary to explain the more intricate interactions among these variables.

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